News Release
Communiqué

Ontario

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée

For Immediate Release
November 16, 2007
2007/nr-201

ONTARIANS ENCOURAGED TO GET A FLU SHOT

Getting a Flu Shot Can Protect You and Those Around You

TORONTO – Flu season has arrived and all Ontarians are urged to get a flu shot to protect themselves and those around them Ontario's Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams said today.

"This is a proven, safe, effective and free way to promote good health and prevent illness," said Williams. "It is important to get the flu shot to protect not just your own health, but also those around you who may be more vulnerable."

Immunization is especially important for those at high risk of complications from influenza such as young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions and the elderly. It is also important for healthcare workers, family members and others in close contact with high-risk people to get the flu shot. If people in high-risk groups do get sick with influenza, the immunity provided by the vaccine can reduce the severity of the illness and possibly save lives.

It is also important to wash your hands often and thoroughly. Hand washing, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. An effective hand washing method is easy to learn and can significantly reduce the spread of infectious diseases, such as influenza, among both children and adults.

Ontario's Universal Influenza Immunization Program – the first of its kind in North America - is in its eighth year. Flu shots are free to anyone aged six months or older who lives, works or attends school in Ontario. They are available across the province through doctors' offices, employer-sponsored clinics, public health units, local pharmacies, hospitals, long-term care homes, Community Health Centres and Community Care Access Centres.

Recent data from Statistics Canada shows that thanks to Ontario's universal immunization program, this province has the highest rate of flu vaccine uptake at 42 per cent, for persons aged 12 years of age and older.

Visit www.gettheflushot.ca for more information on the flu shot and details on where to find a flu immunization clinic in your area.

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2008-00240/

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